



BORDER 2012: U.S. - MEXICO ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM

REGIONAL WORKGROUP NEWSLETTER

California/Baja California

Fall 2005

California/Baja California Regional Workgroup

by *Editing Committee*

The California/Baja California Regional Workgroup is committed to informing the public about Border 2012 activities and progress in our section of the U.S.-Mexico border. This newsletter provides readers with information regarding environmental work being done for or near their communities. It also contains specific contacts for the seven task forces that were created under the Workgroup. We encourage you to become an active participant in any that interest you. We hope to continue to serve our communities on both sides of the border with information that is important to them, through this publication and the Border 2012 Program website, www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder. If you have additional questions or suggestions for future editions of this newsletter, please feel free to contact us at 1-800-334-0741 (EPA San Diego Border Office). ■



Tijuana Estuary, Baja California, México

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
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Border People: Co-Chairs of the California/Baja California Regional Workgroup

In this edition of the California/Baja California Regional Workgroup Newsletter (Fall 2005) we are highlighting the work and perspective of two co-chairs that administer the workgroup within Border 2012. This will give readers a personal look at two individuals that are working to solve environmental challenges that border communities face in the California/Baja California region. We plan to continue these profiles with stories on the other two Regional Workgroup co-chairs as well as the members and leaders of the workgroup's task forces. ■

Enrique Villegas Ibarra General Directorate of Ecology of the State of Baja California



Born in Mexicali, the capital of Baja California Norte, he began his work within the environmental government sector with an invitation to participate in the Mexicali City Council, as Coordinator of the Municipal Ecology Office.

During his time as head of the Municipal Ecology Office, aside from strengthening this area of the municipal government, he worked on improving the environmental protection rules for the Municipality of Mexicali and

initiated a project for the Municipal Ecological Ordinance. Within environmental education programs, he initiated recycling programs in schools, where students were urged to recycle paper, plastics and aluminum to obtain materials that would improve the physical conditions of their school.

In 1998, he became the delegate for Mexicali's General Directorate of Ecology for Baja California, where he maintained his position until he was promoted as the General Director of the same office in October 2003.

Under this title, he has promoted the modernization of the administrative office, obtaining the ISO-9001 certification for the services it offers; in addition to the ecological ordinance of priority regions of the state, programs and efforts for environmental education; as well as the administration and sustainable management of natural resources and wildlife of the state of Baja California.

In terms of environmental border issues, he has promoted and accomplished efforts to clean up the tire pile sites in Baja California, together with members of the California-Baja California Regional group of the Border 2012 program. He also facilitated the stabilization efforts of the abandoned *Metales y Derivados* hazardous waste site in the city of Tijuana. He has worked on transferring the administration of the Baja California air quality monitoring Network from the United States to Mexico; and strengthened the capacity for inspection and surveillance of wastewater discharges to the drainage systems of Tijuana and Mexicali. ■

Laura Yoshii Deputy Regional Administrator (DRA), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Pacific Southwest Region



Laura Yoshii is the Deputy Regional Administrator (DRA), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Pacific Southwest Region. As the DRA, Laura has responsibilities that cover California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, the Pacific Island Trusts Territories, Tribal lands, and the U.S.-Mexico Border area. Laura has been with EPA since 1978. She has carried out various managerial assignments including Director, Waste Management Division; with responsibility for RCRA Hazardous Waste, Solid Waste and

Underground Tank programs; Director, Cross Media Division with responsibility for Pesticides and Toxics, Tribal, Outer Pacific Islands, Federal Facilities, Community-Based and Environmental Justice programs; and a two-year intergovernmental assignment as a Division Director with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control. Prior to joining the U.S. EPA, Ms. Yoshii worked in local government implementing various social service programs. Laura is one of the four Co-Chairs of the California/Baja California Regional Workgroup. Within Border 2012, she has stressed the importance of three principal themes of the program:

- Adopting a Bottom-up Approach -- Identifying environmental priorities and creating environmental solutions to environmental challenges must come through partnerships with all sectors of society along the border.
- Environmental Results -- Creating projects that lead to solid improvements in the environment and public health.
- Leveraging of Resources -- No agency can do it alone. The solutions to environmental challenges are not only in the hands of the environmental agencies, but must be shared and combined with other entities to support and expand the work being done in the border region.

Laura fully supports Border 2012 and hopes to continue to foster communication with border stakeholders as well as to develop environmental indicators to measure progress toward a safer and healthier environment for this region. ■

Taskforce/Media Updates

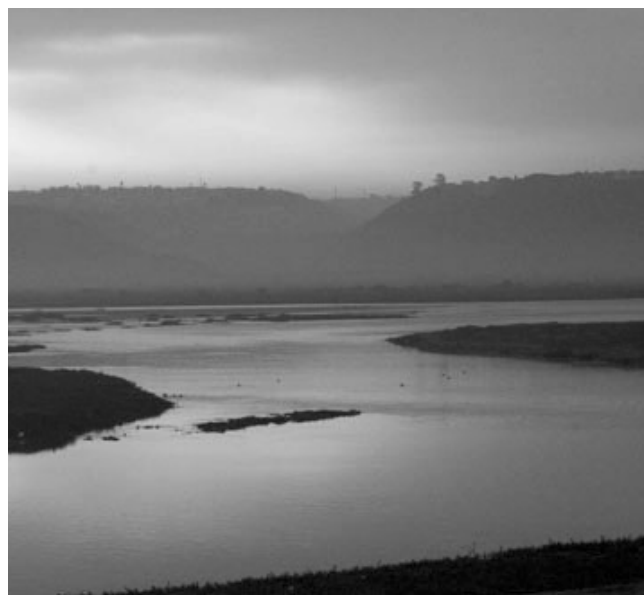
CA-BC Water Task Force

By Katherine Comer, IRSC

The Water Quality Task Force

Tijuana River Watershed, formed in 2004, helps to devise strategies and options for the Binational Vision for the watershed approved by stakeholders in 2005 to meet Border 2012 goals and objectives. Because the Vision uses a holistic approach to watershed sustainability, the Task Force recognizes that improving water quality cannot be achieved without simultaneously addressing other issues, such as water quantity, ecosystems and natural resources, waste, air, and socioeconomic issues. Therefore, the Task Force has decided to subdivide into local subgroups to better tackle specific topics. The Ecology Subgroup has met

twice and is forming a binational network of scientists. Two projects from the Water Task Force have been funded by Border 2012: the Goat Canyon sedimentation control project, and water quality testing on indigenous lands. The co-chairs are Elsa Saxod and Laura Silvan. The Task Force looks forward to supporting more on-the-ground projects initiated by the Subgroups. ■



Tijuana Estuary with Goat Canyon and Spooners Mesa in the Background.

SAN DIEGO/TIJUANA BORDER CLEAN DIESEL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

By Domingo Vigil, APCD



PROJECT OVERVIEW

The U.S.-Mexico Border Clean Diesel Demonstration Project is a U.S. EPA-funded scoping study initiated in 2005 to evaluate the costs and effectiveness of emission control retrofit technologies on Mexican heavy-duty diesel vehicles operating in the San Diego County-Tijuana border region. Upon completion of the scoping study, up to 30 Mexico-domiciled heavy-duty diesel trucks operating in the border region will be retrofitted with appropriate emission controls—such as diesel oxidation catalysts or diesel particulate filters in conjunction with ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel—to demonstrate their viability under Mexican operating conditions. Demonstrating successful, cost-effective approaches to reducing air pollution from Mexican heavy-duty diesel vehicles will help build a market for cleaner diesel engines in the border region and provide an important tool for Mexico as it begins similar cleaner diesel projects.

The project is administered by the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) and modeled after similar projects elsewhere in

California. Because of the international structure of the project, it is first necessary to develop a scoping study (Phase 1 of the project) to draw together U.S. and Mexican stakeholders, evaluate potential fleets, and tailor appropriate retrofit technologies, fuel sources, and emission testing protocols. APCD will work in close collaboration with U.S. and Mexican partners to identify ways to overcome any structural, organizational, or technical challenges that may arise in implementing a project to reduce emissions from Mexican fleets operating in the border region. The Border 2012 San Diego-Tijuana Air Quality Task Force serves as an Advisory Committee for the project.

The project is consistent with the West Coast Diesel Emissions Reductions Collaborative, an international partnership among government agencies, the private sector, and environmental groups in the U.S., Mexico, and Canada to reduce diesel emissions along the Pacific coast. The project will also help achieve the U.S.-Mexico Border 2012 Program Goal #2, "Reduce Air Pollution."

AIR QUALITY BENEFITS

Diesel emissions contribute to unhealthy levels of fine particles, ozone ("smog") and air toxics. Fine particles have been associated with an increased risk of premature death, hospital admissions for heart and lung disease, increased

respiratory symptoms such as asthma episodes, and other adverse health effects. Diesel exhaust disproportionately impacts children, the elderly, and low-income and minority communities, including those along the U.S.-Mexico Border.

Because older diesel vehicles emit significant quantities of particulates and ozone-forming pollutants, retrofitting them with emission control devices and using cleaner diesel fuel can achieve immediate emission reductions and improve air quality. Based on field experience in the U.S., diesel oxidation catalysts can reduce particulate matter emissions from heavy-duty diesel trucks by at least 20 %, hydrocarbons by 50% and carbon monoxide by 40%. Moreover, diesel particulate filters used in combination with ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel will reduce particulate matter emissions by as much as 90%, and hydrocarbon and carbon monoxide emissions by 60 to 90%.

PROGRESS TO DATE

- Research of available types of emission control retrofits technologies to determine which are the most appropriate for this project. It has found that diesel oxidation catalysts in conjunction with ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel are perhaps the most feasible to use on Mexican trucks, since oxidation catalysts require little maintenance compared to particulate filters.
- Research on possible use of alternative diesel fuels such as bio-diesel and emulsified fuels, as well as potential providers in the border region.
- Research on possible emission monitoring processes for this project has found that one

of the most suitable options is the Snap-Acceleration Test SAE J1667, used by California's Air Resources Board on their Heavy-Duty Vehicle Inspection Program, with locations in CHP Inspection facilities/scales, fleet yards and random roadside tests.

- Participation in Border 2012's SD/TJ Air Quality Task Force meetings with the purpose of presenting periodic status reports to stakeholders on both sides of the border. The Task Force will serve as an Advisory Committee for the project.

- Establishing a set of criteria to be met by a potential fleet to participate in the project.
- Work is also being done to establish communication with other fleet owners in an effort to find the best-qualified fleet(s) for the project.

For more information on the U.S.-Mexico Border Clean Diesel Demonstration Project, please contact Domingo Vigil at the San Diego County APCD at (858) 650-4627 or via e-mail at Domingo.Vigil@sdcounty.ca.gov ■

Imperial County Air Quality and Health Information

By Gabe Ruiz

The California Air Resources Board, in partnership with the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District, has developed a Web site to provide air quality and health information in real-time to residents of the Imperial Valley. The objective of this project is to provide residents of the region with easy to understand information on local air quality, health concerns for different levels of air pollution, and how they can protect their health when pollutants reach unhealthy levels.

The Web site, www.imperialvalleyair.org, provides hourly air quality updates for five monitoring sites in Imperial County. This information is provided in the form of an air quality index (AQI) developed by U.S. EPA. The AQI uses a numerical scale from 0 to 500. AQI numbers below 100 are generally considered to be satisfactory, and numbers above 100 represent greater levels of pollution and health risks. To make it easier

to understand, the AQI is divided into six color-coded categories (green, yellow, orange, red, purple, and maroon), each corresponding to a different level of health concern.

In addition to providing access to real-time air quality data, the Web site allows area residents to sign-up to receive email or text message notifications when air quality in the region reaches unhealthy levels. Efforts are underway to develop a similar web site that covers Baja California.

For more information, visit the Imperial County air quality Web site at: www.imperialvalleyair.org. ■



Air monitoring sites in Imperial county

Metales y Derivados Site Cleanup Proceeds to Remedial Planning Phase

By Ing Juan Manuel Aguilar, SEMARNAT, Larry Bowerman, EPA and Emily Pimentel, EPA

Cleanup Accomplishments and Next Steps: On June 17, 2005, the Metales y Derivados Technical Workgroup convened a meeting in Tijuana to review the accomplishments over the last year and begin planning for the next steps to clean up this site. Among the accomplishments reported were actions to reduce the highest risks posed to public health:

- *Recycling of about 50 tons of process equipment in Mexico;

- *Restricting access by installing fencing, better warning signs, and community outreach on the hazards posed by the site.

The accomplishments and next steps discussed in the recent technical workgroup meeting are the beginning of long-term cleanup process. This also marks the first time that a border community impacted

by a hazardous waste site, has been formally included in a technical workgroup with responsibility for making site cleanup decisions.

Remedial Action Process: The Technical Workgroup was formed in June 2004, after Mexico signed a declaration of cooperation and commitment to remediate the Metales site and create a transparent process to inform and involve the community on the cleanup. As part of the declaration, there were specific actions identified, such

as defining roles and responsibility among the federal, state, and local governments. The Technical Workgroup proposed a remedial plan consisting of four phases:

Phase 1: Removal Action: remove waste posing highest risks to public health

Phase 2: Cleanup Alternative Analysis: analyze and select a preferred remedy

Phase 3: Design Remedy: prepare

- *Removal and disposal of nearly 2000 tons of hazardous waste (at a U.S. Ecology facility in Nevada);

detailed design and award engineering contract

Phase 4: Complete Cleanup: implement remedy; restore property to productive use

Site History: The US and Mexico partnered on the Metales cleanup as a result of their mutual commitments to meet abandoned site cleanup and restoration objectives established under Border 2012 Goal 3, "Reduce Land Contamination." Metales is an abandoned, former secondary lead smelter which recovered lead from used vehicle batteries and other sources. It is located in an area zoned as light industrial just

above the Colonia Chilpancingo, a neighborhood of about 10,000 residents. In 1989, PROFEPA, the Mexican environmental enforcement agency of SEMARNAT issued an order to shutdown the facility because it did not have sound management practices for the hazardous waste generated, primarily lead slag, metal-laden battery casings, and other wastes. As a result, the US owner abandoned the facility.

Although the Mexican government made efforts to address this matter, on October 23, 1998, the EHC submitted a petition to the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) asserting that

the government was failing to enforce its environmental laws effectively. The CEC prepared a factual record for the case, but responded that they found no evidence to support this claim. The factual record did, however, increase awareness of the Metales site and the need to improve binational capacity to respond to matters involving abandoned border sites. In 2004, EPA contributed \$85,000 to help build capacity for short-term actions to reduce the highest risks, allowing time to evaluate the most cost-effective long-term cleanup actions. EPA's efforts involved coordinating the permits for disposal of waste, defining the practices necessary to

minimize risks to the community while conducting the Phase 1 cleanup action, and directly removing 200 tons of waste. In 2004/2005, the SEMARNAT and the state of Baja California contributed funding to remove an additional 1800 tons of waste.

Phase 2 Cleanup Alternative

Analysis: Since Phase 1 activities removed the highest risk hazardous waste, the workgroup recommended starting Phase 2. This involves completing a site characterization study, a baseline risk assessment, and an evaluation of remedial alternatives. The site characterization study will better define the nature and extent of the contaminant sources, which is important for development of suitable alternatives. The risk assessment will be used to better understand the sources of contaminations and the exposure pathways (i.e. windblown dust, human contact with soil, etc.) that lead to potential risks at the site. The remedial alternatives will then be designed to consider how to reduce risk by eliminating exposure pathways. The technical committee is working on the technical and logistical details to accomplish these goals. ■



Before Clean up of Metales Area



After Clean up of Metales Area

Half-Million Tires Gone and More Clean-up Underway!

By Hugo Zepeda, SEMARNAT, M.C Maria de Los Angeles Alvarez, SEMARNAT, Larry Bowerman, EPA and Emily Pimentel, EPA

Border 2012 Tire Cleanup underway:

Specific solid waste streams, such as tires, are expected to increase as a result of population and economic growth in the border region. Risks already exist as a result of scrap tires in the region. When scrap tires are improperly used, they can pose an environmental hazard if they burn. They can also be a public health risk and lead to mosquito-borne diseases such as the West Nile Virus.

Fortunately, Border 2012 Program Goal 3 (Reduce Land

Contamination) includes a specific objective to clean up three of the largest tire piles in the US-Mexico border region. As part of this effort, the Border 2012 CA/Baja CA Waste & Enforcement Task Force reported collecting 420,000 tires from the INNOR tire pile near Mexicali. The tires were transported to CEMEX-Ensenada and used as fuel in their cement plant. Cleanup of Centinela tire pile (also near Mexicali) began in mid-2005. The INNOR and Centinela tire piles are among the largest tire piles in the border region. These two cleanups move the program closer to

meeting Goal 3.

Binational Tire Management

Strategy: In June 2004, the US and Mexico went even further by signing a letter of intent to develop a scrap tire management strategy. This commitment resulted because of the growing awareness and concern among border region residents. It was apparent that even if legacy tires piles are cleaned up, new tire piles could be created if scrap tire are not properly managed. Development of the tire management strategy is a work in progress, but the basic elements of

the strategy are well accepted:

- *Better understand the problems contributing to waste tire generation;
- *Cleanup legacy tire piles using cost-effective solutions;
- *Prevent new tire piles, and;
- *Involve communities in creating solutions;

In the first two years of the program, Border 2012 partners have begun to address the waste tire problem. A few of their efforts are discussed below.

Better understand the problems contributing to waste tire generation:

There are a variety of factors contributing to the generation of waste the used tire market, inadequate solid waste management, and limited resources and information to address the problems. Border governments such as the State of Baja California require tire haulers operating in Mexico to have a permit. The California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) requires tire haulers to operate under a permit and manifest all tire loads. In the past two years the CIWMB has conducted outreach to US and Mexican haulers on these requirements. Local governments such as the City of San Diego Solid Waste Local Enforcement Agency (LEA) have run successful cleanup programs, such as the Tijuana River Valley cleanup of tires and trash, using funds provided by the CIWMB. All governments acknowledge the importance of having adequate enforcement, as well as, addressing compliance and enforcement gaps.

Cleanup legacy tire piles using cost-effective solutions:

In the US and Mexico, the most cost-effective and readily available option for disposing of scrap tires has been to use them as fuel. Some cement plants and power plants use

shredded tires as an alternative fuel to replace some of their regular fuel (typically coal or petroleum coke). Use of legacy waste tires as fuel has been a particularly effective in Mexico for two main reasons:

Legacy tires have fewer alternative use options because their quality deteriorates over time.

CEMEX, a cement kiln operator, signed an agreement with SEMARNAT to receive scrap tires for use as fuel at no cost.

Border 2012 partners made direct contributions both in money and other resources to cleanup border legacy tire piles. Between June 2004 and June 2005, EPA contributed \$200,000 to the cleanup of the INNOR tire pile, to help help understand the challenges of cleaning up legacy tire piles in Mexico, while achieving real results. SEMARNAT contributed to cleanup of 40,000 tires in Tijuana. SEMARNAT also committed to cleanup all of the Centinela tire pile during 2005 by transporting tires by rail to Hermosillo and by truck to Ensenada, where the tires will be used as fuel by two CEMEX cement plants.

Prevent new tire piles: The borderwide challenge is preventing new tire piles by developing alter-

native scrap tire markets, such as fuel, civil engineering applications, crumb rubber, etc. The good news is that there are many viable scrap tire markets, though long-term planning and investments will be required to use these markets effectively. One of the most exciting recent developments being considered worldwide is the concept of product stewardship. This means placing the responsibility on tire manufacturers to address life cycle issues, such as using less oil and energy resources in the production of tires; ensuring consumers know the best ways to maximize the useful life of tires; and facilitating tire recycling.

Involve communities in creating solutions:

Unless communities know about scrap tire management problems and risks, and are given an opportunity to contribute to the solutions, the road to resolving the problem will be slow. The Border 2012 Program Waste Policy Forum is developing the binational tire management strategy and will be seeking input from stakeholders. ■



Tires collected from Mexicali were transported by rail to Hermosillo as part of a pilot exercise to determine feasibility of using rail



Cleanup of Centinela in process

Farm Workers' Health Concerns

By Norman Calero, EPA Region 9

California is the leading agricultural state in the U.S., with an estimated 1.6 million agricultural workers and their families. Agricultural workers are at risk of exposure to pesticide products. But many farm workers and their families lack awareness of the hazards and proper handling of pesticides, and there is limited training of health care providers to recognize and treat pesticide-related illnesses.

Furthermore, Imperial County has the state's highest rate of asthma hospitalizations for all ages and among children aged 1 – 14. In

1992 – 2002, 88% of childhood lead poisonings reported in San Diego County involved Latino children. It is believed that these numbers are the result of the use of homemade remedies and ceramic cookware, and consumption of Mexican candies that contain lead.

To address these and other environmental health issues, the program partner have begun efforts to scope out an environmental health taskforce in the California/Baja California border region. The task force will bring together representatives from federal, state and local agencies, tribes, and non-govern-

mental and community people from both the U.S. and Mexico. At a preliminary meeting, taskforce members identified pesticide issues and asthma triggers as issues of particular concern in the CA/BC border region.

Task force members have already worked with Mexican agencies to determine how pesticide exposures are being reported and tracked. Training the current California reporting program will also be scheduled. U.S agencies will work with Mexico to develop a binational reporting system. Also, Train-the-Trainer courses will be held in both

the U.S. and Mexico on pesticide risks and safe handling, including ways to minimize exposure for families and children.

Future border environmental health efforts will focus on reducing the risk to border families, especially children, that may result from exposure to air pollution, drinking water contaminants, pesticides, and other toxic chemicals for more information, please contact Norman Calero at calero.norman@epa.gov. ■

Imperial County — Mexicali Emergency Response Plan Signed

by Lauren Volpini, EPA Region 9

On May 24, 2005, representatives from the governments of Imperial County, Calif., and Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico, met to celebrate the signing of the first Binational Imperial County-Mexicali Emergency Prevention and Response plan.

The Imperial County-Mexicali Emergency Response Plan, along with streamlining emergency response, notification and communication efforts, also guarantees cooperation among all levels of emergency responders. Along with

reducing the risks associated with hazardous materials, the plan calls for necessary training, a crucial element in emergency response. Responders will conduct “real life” emergency exercises to ensure comprehensive and cohesive responses on both sides of the border.

“With the Imperial County-Mexicali Emergency Response Plan in place, communities on both sides of the border will now be safer and better equipped to handle potential chemical releases,” said Wayne Nastri, Regional Administrator, U.S. EPA.

Attending the event were high-ranking representatives from the US and Mexico, including: Wally Leimgruber, Board of Supervisors, Imperial County, Calif.; Mayor Samuel Ramos Flores of the City of Mexicali; Maria de Lourdes Cordero Zamora, Civil Protection of Mexico; Raymundo Noriega,

Baja California Civil Protection; Fred Nippins, Fire Chief/OES Coordinator, Imperial County and representing the EPA, Lauren Volpini. ■



Imperial County-Mexicali Emergency Response Plan celebration cake



Representatives at the celebration, from left to right: Wally Leimgruber, Chairman, County of Imperial, Board of Supervisors; Lauren Volpini, US Mexico Border Program Manager; Maria de Lourdes Cordero Zamora, representing the federal government of Mexico

EPA published and distributed a bilingual (English/Spanish) Field Guide for Emergency Response Communication in March 2005 in cooperation with the Arizona/Sonora Emergency Preparedness and Response Task Force of the Border 2012 U.S./Mexico Environmental Program.

The Guide will help facilitate communication among bilingual emergency responders in the border communities. It will be useful in conducting training, exercises and in actual emergencies. It contains commonly used terms and phrases, as well as valuable reference information and useful phone numbers.

Copies of the Guide can be downloaded from the Web at: www.epa.gov/Border2012. ■



US Tribes and Mexican Indigenous Communities Issue Joint Communiqué

Contact: *Nina Heptner, NAEPC*

The 26 U.S. tribes and various Mexican indigenous communities in the border region issued a joint communiqué to express their environmental issues, accomplishments and priorities (see highlights below). Following is a summary of the communiqué, for the full text is available at www.naepc.com/downloads.

Both U.S. tribes and Mexican indigenous communities are working to improve air quality on their reservations and in their communities. U.S. tribes and Mexican indigenous communities are faced with air pollution problems due to agricultural and metropolitan areas near or on their reservations and communities. The Cocopah Tribe, in Arizona, is conducting a demonstration project to study improved tilling of farmlands on the tribe's reservations, to decrease the exposure of tribe members to dust emissions. The Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Tribe in Texas, located in an urban environment along the border, is sampling ambient air for volatile organic compounds and hazardous air pollutants, in partnership with EPA Region 6 and the University of Texas School of Public Health. This will provide baseline assessment of exposure and identify potential health risks to the tribal community. The Los Coyotes Band of Cahuilla Indians is paving dirt roads on its reservation to reduce air pollution. U.S. Tribes with monitoring stations will continue air sampling for ozone and particulate matter (which are largely produced by off-reservation activities) to further define concerns of their communities. They will continue to seek funds to reduce emissions that affect their communities.

The ability to provide access to safe drinking water and basic wastewater sanitation is another high priority for tribal and indigenous communities in the U.S. and Mexico. Quitovac, a small O'odham indigenous community in Mexico, received funding for a potable water system for the community and boarding school for 100 children (with funding coordinated through the Tohono O'odham Nation). Nearly all the indigenous communities in the Mexico border region lack access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, and these communities will be severely impacted by the proposed new water usage fees. EPA's tribal border infrastructure program has funded 39 projects for 15 Tribes in the California and Arizona Border Region, providing access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation for over 8,000 homes. Despite these successes, there is still an estimated \$60 million shortfall in funding needed for tribal infrastructure. Tribes are also concerned about

protecting shared aquifers which are threatened by overdraft and contamination from off-reservation activities.

Tribal communities are greatly affected by illegal dumping. On the Tohono O'odham Nation in Arizona and the Campo Indian Reservation in California, there is an ongoing struggle to remove waste left behind due to undocumented immigration. In other areas near the border, tribes and indigenous communities are struggling to halt the illegal burning of trash, dumping of cars, and the increase of illegal drug labs. With the increase in traffic across tribal lands and communities, it is imperative that we be prepared for environmental accidents and strive to put preventative measures in place.

Indigenous communities in the border area also lack solid waste disposal programs. In 2004, the Pala Band of Mission Indians removed 34,000 tires from its reservation, and started a recycling program for waste oil and consumer recyclable items. The Tohono O'odham Nation has estimated that there are over 300 wildcat dumps on its reservation, and that 1,500 undocumented migrants dump six tons of trash on the reservation every day.

As we move forward into this next year, our immediate tribal priorities are:

- Improve the air quality on reservations and in indigenous communities
- Increase access to and improve infrastructure for safe drinking water and wastewater by seeking continued funding of the Tribal Border Infrastructure Program, including tribal allocations and funding for Mexican indigenous communities
- Reduce the amount of contamination left behind due to undocumented immigration
- Promote emergency preparedness along the border region
- Establish a Lower Colorado River Task Force under the Border 2012 program. ■



Furthering the Goals of Border 2012 through Environmental Education

by Kama Dean, Pro Peninsula

In 2003 the Environmental Education Council for the Californias (EECC) took on the role of the California/Baja California Environmental Education Task Force for Border 2012. In this role, it is our goal to use environmental education strategically to integrate educational components into the overall goals and objectives of the Border 2012 effort for the California-Baja California border region.

Project Objectives:

To foster understanding and inspire responsibility for the state of the environment and its relation to quality of life in the border region of the Californias.

To provide a forum for public dialogue and participation concerning environmental education (EE) in the Californias and to mobilize cooperation to address critical environmental issues in the region.

To fuel EE projects on the ground that serve as catalysts to improve EE practices and policies throughout the Californias and of specific concern to the region's Border 2012 Task Forces.

To achieve these objectives, the EECC developed a set of environmental education priorities for the region. The council then funded,

through a mini-grant process, regional projects that address these priorities, supporting environmental education projects and organizations in the region.

In late 2004 we initiated the Border 2012 mini-grants project, and requested proposals for trainings and research projects, as well as the production and distribution of educational materials, public awareness campaigns, and field trip-based programs that addressed critical environmental issues that are relevant and significant to the border region. Most importantly, these new mini-grants focused on furthering the goals and objectives of Border 2012: reduce water pollution, reduce air pollution, reduce land contamination, improve environmental health, reduce exposure to chemicals, and improve environmental performance.

Mini-grants have been awarded for three projects:

Hazardous Substances in the Home,
Proyecto Bioregional de Educacion Ambiental (PROBEA), Tijuana

Contact: Doretta Winkleman, San Diego
Natural History Museum, dwinkelman@sdnhm.org, (619) 232-3821

Monitoring of Subterranean Bodies of Water in the Municipality of Tijuana, Universidad Tecnologica de Tijuana (UTT), Tijuana

Contact: Ricardo Toledo Merediz, UTT,
ambiental@uttijuana.edu.mx, (664) 971-7036

Design of a mechanism for communication and diffusion of air quality environmental and health affects for the Baja California-California community, Centro Industrial de Gestion Ambiental, A.C. (CIGA)

Contact: Jose Carmelo Zavala Alvarez, CIGA,
jczavalascc@telnor.net, (664)900-7334 or
(664) 634-6875

For more information on the EE Task Force or any of our mini-grant recipients, please contact Kama Dean, binational coordinator, kama@proopeninsula.org, 619-574-6643, or contact the grantee directly. ■



Highlights on the US — Mexico Border Indicators Effort

By Steven Young, EPA Washington DC.

A physician keeps track of blood pressure readings and other vital information (e.g., cholesterol levels) in order to observe a patients' cardiovascular health. Similarly, one can rely on multiple indicators to take a pulse on the environment and environmental health conditions along the US-Mexico border. Indicators can also create a basis for tracking changes in environmental and public health conditions, and hopefully improvements over time, as a result of the collective environmental effort at the border. Thus, indicators can be used as a tool to inform the public and border stakeholders about Border 2012 progress and current environmental and health conditions. Ultimately, the public and stakeholders will benefit from developing and maintaining sound binational indicators. The U.S. and Mexico, like many other countries, use indicators to monitor their programs, plan their next actions, and track trends.

A sample border indicator, currently

under consideration is percent of population connected to potable water supply. As more water supply infrastructure is built to provide safe drinking water to more border communities, this indicator would show a positive upward trend. Development of indicators to measure progress in achieving all six goals of the Border 2012 program is currently underway. The six goals cover environmental media (water, air, and land) as well as environmental health, emergency preparedness and response, and cooperative enforcement and compliance. Both environmental and program indicators are necessary to simultaneously report on the effectiveness of the Border 2012 program and changing conditions at the border. Environmental indicators measure actual border conditions and trends over time, as well as the progress toward meeting specific environmental and health targets. Program indicators measure environmental management activities and progress toward meeting Border 2012 goals and objectives.

The Border Indicators Task Force (BITF) was created in December 2003 to coordinate with all the Border 2012 stakeholders to define a set of indicators as well as prepare protocols for the collection and analysis of the data necessary to report environmental and health results. The goal of the Task Force is to publish the initial set of binational indicators by the end of this year, and then to develop a sustainable mechanism to update indicators periodically. Various stakeholders are participating in developing and using indicators. In addition to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Mexico's Secretariat for the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT), agencies such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Mexican Secretariat of Health (Secretaría de Salud) are contributing. The state and local health and environmental departments on both sides of the border are also key players in this process, as well as international organizations such as the Pan American

Health Organization (PAHO) and the Southwest Consortium for Environmental Research and Policy (SCERP).

For more information, please contact the following officials or visit us online at <http://www.epa.gov/border2012/indicators.htm>.

Steve Young

EPA
(202) 566-0608
young.steve@epa.gov

Sandra Duque

EPA
(202) 566-1810
duque.sandra@epa.gov

Salvador Sanchez

SEMARNAT
(52-55) 5628-0854
ssanchez@semarnat.gob.mx

Iris Jimenez Castillo

SEMARNAT
(52-55) 5628-0854
iris.jimenez@semarnat.gob.mx ■

Strategic Communications: Essential to the Border 2012 Program Success

By Albes Gaona, EPA Washington DC

Strategic communication is critical to a successful Border 2012 Program. Ensuring effective and timely communications with the public, program partners, and other stakeholders, is a program priority. To that end, the Borderwide Communications Task Force (BCTF) was created at the first National Coordinators Meeting in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, on December 2003 with participants from state, regional, U.S. and Mexican federal offices. Since then, the task force has expanded to include additional stakeholders from the border region.

The goal of the BCTF is to promote the Border 2012 Program through timely and efficient internal and external communications. In addition, the task force develops communication tools (see below), and coordinates communications for all events and outreach activities.

Over the past few months, the taskforce has been working on the development of the Border 2012 Communications Strategies in addition to other projects, as reported at the 2005 National Coordinators Meeting in Tucson last March. The strategy, a guideline for timely and efficient communications,

has been finalized and is now in effect. Other accomplishments included the completed redesign of the official Border 2012 web site, aimed at improving information sharing online; the completion of the Border 2012 Program Directory (Yellow Pages) listing most program participants; and the Border 2012 Information Kit, a basic outreach package containing program fact sheets and other information.

The BCTF's main goal for 2006-07 is to successfully carry out the Border 2012 Communications Strategies along with other activities intended to enhance program communications at all levels. For additional information on the BCTF please visit the website at <http://www.epa.gov/border2012/communications.htm>, or contact the taskforce leaders at:

U.S.: Albes Gaona

EPA's Office of International Affairs

Phone: 202 564-6253
E-mail: gaona.albes@epa.gov

Mexico: Iris Jiménez

SEMARNAT's Office of Statistics and Environmental Information
Phone: (55) 5628-0854
E-mail: iris.jimenez@semarnat.gob.mx ■

"Strategic communication is critical to a successful Border 2012 Program"

U.S. and Mexican Representatives Report on Border Environmental Accomplishments and Priorities

By Albes Gaona, EPA Washington DC

This year's National Coordinators Meeting (NCM) took place in Tucson, AZ and was successfully hosted by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and the U.S. EPA's Region 9. The meeting was chaired by Jerry Clifford, the U.S. National Coordinator and Maria Teresa Bandala, Mexico's National Coordinator, and attended by representatives from U.S. and Mexico federal, state and local governments, as well as border tribes and indigenous communities, non-profits and the public sector.

During the two-day event, the National Coordinators and participants renewed their commitment to the Border 2012 goals, reviewed progress, and set directions for 2006. The public had the opportunity to attend the open meetings and the public session on the second day, and for the first time, representatives from the U.S. border tribes and Mexico's indigenous communities presented their accomplishments and priorities. In the end, the meeting resulted in a shared understanding of environmental accomplishments, and priority actions needed in upcoming years to address environmental and health concerns across the U.S.-Mexico Border.

Among the many accomplishments reported by program partners:

A reaffirmed commitment to provide safe drinking water and sanitation to protect public health in border communities. In 2003 and 2004, the U.S.EPA provided \$95 million in grant funds through the

Border Environment Cooperation Commission and North American Development Bank for critical safe drinking water and sanitation projects benefiting over a million border residents.

Efforts made by El Paso, Ciudad Juarez, and Doña Ana County in moving towards meeting air quality standards for all pollutants were recognized. Also acknowledged were the joint efforts of Federal and State authorities in California and Baja California for beginning, in 2004, to transfer management of 13 monitoring stations from U.S. agencies to Mexican authorities in Mexicali, Tijuana and Playas de Rosarito.

Over 281,000 scrap tires have been removed from abandoned tire pile sites in Mexicali, Tijuana, Tecate and Ciudad Juarez, the tires were used as fuel in cement plants. (See article on Pg. 5)

A continuing effort to remove and dispose of 1,500 tons of hazardous waste from the *Metales y Derivados* site, an abandoned secondary lead smelter and battery recycling facility in Tijuana. (See article on Pg. 4)

The Border 2012 Environmental Health Workgroup is forming an alliance with the U.S.-Mexico Border Health Commission to target resources and improve collaboration among environmental health agencies at all levels of government in both countries.

Efforts to expand the Border Compliance Assistance Center will strengthen compliance at U.S.-



Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano welcomes the Border 2012 National Coordinators Meeting to Tucson.

Mexico Ports-of-Entry, improve compliance by expanding pollution prevention and environmental management systems, and use data to identify areas where regulated facilities' toxic substances emissions pose the greatest potential to harm surrounding communities.

A commitment was made to prevent environmental accidents, and where accidents do happen, to prevent the worst consequences. In the last year, first responders have received training and conducted exercises to prepare for and manage chemical accidents and respond to terrorism.

As the Border 2012 Program moves forward, program partners agreed to the following immediate priorities for 2005-06:

Continue to increase access to, and improve, safe drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.

Retrofit diesel buses and trucks, and improve availability of low sulfur diesel fuel along the border.

Carry out a demonstration project for the binational clean-up and restoration of abandoned sites contaminated with hazardous waste.

Clean up additional tire piles.

Promote financing mechanisms for landfill projects involved in the Methane to Markets initiative

As progress continues to be made this year, program partners acknowledge that there is important work yet to be done. But they are confident that with continued collaboration, and proper transparency and accountability, a substantial contribution towards a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable border environment for future generations will be made. ■



Program partners at the National Coordinators meeting



The National Coordinators Ma. Teresa Bandala and Jerry Clifford

Acting Locally: What the border-wide Environmental Health Workgroup is and how it works with the states of California, Baja California, Arizona, and Sonora

By Kirstin Crowder, Association of Schools of Public Health Fellow at the USEPA

The border-wide Environmental Health Workgroup (EHWG), is charged with addressing environmental health problems that are binational and have border-wide applicability.

The bulk of the Workgroup's efforts have been in funding studies of air and pesticide pollution epidemiology, and in environmental health education and professional capacity-building. Currently, the EHWG is completing a project that began in Imperial Valley, CA, on pesticide exposure and illness in children. Researchers used samples of urine – and occasionally blood – along with medical records to estimate the prevalence of pesticide-related illness in children, and assess the feasibility of using children's health clinics to identify high-risk children. The EHWG is also completing another pesticide study that investigated exposure measurement techniques in Arizona; since pesticides break down in the environment, researchers wanted to find out whether urine samples reveal exposure to the original pesticide compound as well as the degraded compound, and how widespread this potentially confusing phenomenon is.

A new project is just beginning in Calexico, CA and Mexicali, Baja California, that will assess what surveillance mechanisms are in place to track two types of environmental exposures and their related diseases: air quality and asthma, and pesticide prevalence and its symptoms or measured levels in the body. Finally, through its partnership with the Pan American Health Organization, the EHWG funded an Environmental Health Indicators workshop in San Diego, CA, last December. Indicators are measures that demonstrate change over time and yield particular meaning to their users. The purpose of this workshop was to talk to local stakeholders involved in environmental health research or projects, to find out what indicators they would most highly recommend.

In keeping with Border 2012's bottom-up approach, the EHWG frequently relies on the regional environmental health taskforces for information on environmental health needs. At the annual EHWG meeting in February, the leaders of the environmental health taskforces were invited to give presentations on the problems identified as priorities to their local constituents. The Workgroup was interested to see whether these priorities overlapped. Common priorities cited by the presenters were air pollution (or asthma-triggers), water pollution and scarcity, and pesticide poisoning.

The meeting participants also voiced a need for indicators for environmentally-mediated diseases. Accordingly, the EHWG has turned its attention to developing air and water indicators. It is about to hire two contractors to assess the completeness of data in air and water monitoring and their anticipated health effects. Additionally, the work group is creating two teams of experts in air quality research or management, water quality, and associated illnesses. These teams will make recommendations on which indicators will best serve the stakeholders of Border 2012 and how to develop them, based partly on the results of the contractors' work. The Workgroup hopes that these recommendations will be available by late fall 2005.

In a program as large and multi-themed as Border 2012, partnering can be difficult, especially when the scope of work differs. The partnership of the EHWG and its regional counterparts in California/Baja California and Arizona/Sonora is an example of how some of those gaps in communication and resources can be bridged. For more information on the EHWG

and its projects go to <http://www.epa.gov/ehwg>. For a full description of Border 2012 and the relationships between its member groups, please see the Border 2012 Framework document, at: www.epa.gov/Border2012/intro.htm.

Current projects the EHWG funds in California, Baja California, Arizona, and Sonora

- Inventory/Assessment of Environmentally-related Disease and Environmental Databases in the California/Baja California Border Region (Calexico and Mexicali)
- Pilot Study Evaluating Symptomatic Children for Organophosphate Pesticide Exposure (Imperial Valley, California)
- Urinary Metabolites in Environmental Media: A Scoping and Feasibility Study (Yuma, Arizona)

Past projects the EHWG has funded in California, Baja California, Arizona and Sonora

- U.S.-Mexico Asthma Surveillance Demonstration Projects (Calexico and Mexicali.)
- Project Clean Environment for Healthy Kids II (San Diego County, Calif.; Tijuana, Baja California; and Somerton, Arizona)
- Pesticide Exposure in Women of Reproductive Age: A U.S.-Mexico Border Study (Imperial County, Calif.)
- Household Pesticide Use Survey (Douglas, Arizona)
- Pilot Study of Methods to Assess Infants' Pesticide Exposure and Response to Vaccination (Imperial County, Calif.)
- Pesticide Exposure and Potential Health Effects in Young Children Along the U.S. - Mexico Border: Pesticide Exposure in Children Living in Agricultural Areas (Yuma County, Ariz.)
- U.S.-Mexico Border 2012 Initiative for Pediatric Lead Exposure Identification and Risk Reduction (Tijuana, Baja California; and Arizona/Sonora border region)
- National Human Exposure Assessment Survey (NHEXAS) Border Project 1996-2002 (Arizona border region)
- Investigation of Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (Nogales, Arizona) ■

Ten States Alliance

By Ricardo Martinez and Claudia Villacorta, P.E.



For decades, efforts to address environmental issues along the U.S.-Mexico border region were usually made on a project-by-project basis. But approximately ten years ago, these efforts became more coordinated as a result of the fourteenth U.S. - Mexico Border Governors Conference in May 1996 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the ten U.S. - Mexico Border States' Retreat in Austin, Texas in November 1996. During these meetings, an official framework was created for the U.S.-Mexico Border States' Environmental Program.

The framework formed an alliance, known as the Ten States Alliance (a.k.a. Ten States Retreat), to develop a mechanism for ongoing communication, cooperation, and exchange of information among the environmental agencies of the U.S.-Mexico Border States. The Ten States Alliance is comprised of the leading officials of the state agencies responsible for environmental protection, and natural resource conservation for the states of Arizona, Baja California, California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, New Mexico, Nuevo Leon, Sonora, Tamaulipas and Texas.

Since its inception in 1996, the Ten States Alliance has aimed at providing a forum to discuss high-level policy on environmental issues in the shared US-Mexico shared border region. This forum has helped identifying common goals, challenges, differences, and unifying common ground on important issues. The Ten States have proven to be a group of consensus builders in a dynamic setting, which has also given way to fruitful relationship building among the ten environmental authorities that oversee the US-Mexico border region. The Ten States Alliance has been funded through several sources in the past, including the Ford Foundation, the State of California, and since 1997 through a grant from the U.S. EPA Office of International Activities, and U.S. EPA Regions 6 and 9. These EPA grants are managed by the Western Governor's Association.

The Ten States Alliance has paved the way for ongoing coordination and information exchange among the state environment agencies, and between them and key institutions and stakeholders in the border region. Some of the major accomplishments of the alliance include:

- Lobbying the U.S. Congress to sustain and increase the Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF);
- Lobbying to keep the Border Environment Cooperation Commission budget at its current level;
- Joint development of the Border 2012 Environmental Program;

- Providing a forum for high-level policy discussion and consensus building on contentious issues; and,
- Development of several key Joint Declarations for the Environmental Worktable at the Border Governors Conference.

The Ten States Alliance meets annually to discuss environmental issues of mutual concern and to develop joint declarations for the Border Governors Conference. The Border Governors Conference (BGC) is an annual meeting of the Ten U.S.-Mexico Border Governors, their designated representatives and worktables. Since the first conference in 1980, the BGC has enhanced joint border efforts addressing agriculture, border crossings, border security, education, environment, tourism, economic development, and health. At this year's conference in Torreon, Coahuila, the Ten States Alliance developed three Joint Declarations, which were adopted by the ten governors. The governors declared:

- (1) To advance the production of Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel Fuel for air quality and public health improvement by encouraging the Mexican Congress to accelerate planned investments for modernization at the Mexican Petroleum (PEMEX) refineries, thereby facilitating the introduction of this cleaner burning diesel fuel throughout the border region.
- (2) To implement and promote comprehensive waste management programs throughout the U.S.-Mexico border region, including a strategy for state-to-state and transboundary information exchange on waste management. Economic instruments, such as creation of environmental funds or the introduction of a "Green Seal", will be considered as an aid to develop pollution prevention and environmental remediation programs.
- (3) To request the Mexican Congress and Mexican Border State Congresses to promote the legislation to have used vehicles-both legally imported vehicles and regularized vehicles-comply with Mexican federal and state emission standards as a prerequisite for registration.

The next BGC will be held in the summer of 2006 in Austin, Texas. In preparation for the conference, the Ten States Alliance will meet again to discuss progress and develop new joint declarations. California will host the next Ten States Retreat in May 2006.

For more informations, please contact:

Ricardo Martínez at rmartinez@waterboards.ca.gov

Ricardo Martínez is Senior Policy Advisor for Border Affairs at the State Water Resources Control Board.

Claudia Villacorta at

cvillacorta@waterboards.ca.gov Claudia Villacorta, P.E. is Border Infrastructure Coordinator at the State Water Resources Control Board. ■

California/Baja California Regional Workgroup Co-Chairs

Enrique Villegas Director, General Directorate of Ecology State of Baja California	Dr. Alan Lloyd Secretary California Environmental Protection Agency	Laura Yoshii Deputy Regional Administrator U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9	Hugo Adriel Zepeda Federal Delegate for Baja California Secretariat for Environment and Natural Resources
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Task Force Co-Chairs

U. S. Co-Chair and Organization	Phone Numbers & E-mail	Mexico Co-Chair and Organization	Phone Numbers & E-mail
Waste and Enforcement			
Emily Pimentel US EPA (Waste Co-Chair)	(415) 972-3326 pimentel.emily@epa.gov	Lic. Ricardo Castellanos Delegado PROFEPA	(011 52) 686 568-9260 or (011 52) 686 568-9267 (011 52) 686 568-9266 fax pfpabc@telnor.net
John Rothman US EPA (Enforcement Co-Chair)	(415) 972-3923 rothman.john@epa.gov		
Lisa Brown Cal-EPA State of California Co-Chair	(916) 322-7310 lbrown@calepa.ca.gov		
Environmental Education			
Anne Marie Tipton Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve	(619) 575-3613 (619) 575-6913 amtipton@parks.ca.gov	Maria Castillo Curry International Council of Monuments and States	(619) 231-0121 (0 11 52) 664-680--99-33 (fax) marucurry@yahoo.com
Air Quality—Imperial Valley/Mexicali			
Kimberly Collins CCEBRES	(760) 768-5510 (760) 768-5583 fax kcollins@mail.sdsu.edu	Dr. Margarito Quintero Nuñez UABC	(011 52) 686 566-4150 maquinu@iing.mxl.uabc.mx
Air Quality—San Diego Tijuana			
William E. Powers Powers Engineering	(619) 295-2072 (619) 295-2073 fax	Saúl Guzmán SEMARNAT	(011 52) 664-634-7516 (011 52) 664-634-7483 fax saul.guzman@semarnat.gob.mx
Water Quality—Tijuana River Watershed			
Elsa Saxod City of San Diego	(619) 533-3466 (619) 533-3866 fax esaxod@sandiego.gov	Laura Silván Environmental Education Border Project	(011 52) 664-630-05-90 fax (call for fax tone) ambiente@proyecto Fronterizo.org.mx
Emergency Preparedness and Response—San Diego/Tijuana			
Mike Dorsey Chief, County of San Diego Dept of Env. Health, Hazardous Materials Division	(619) 338-2395 (619) 338-2139 fax michael.dorsey@sdcounty.ca.gov	Lic. Ricardo Castellanos Delegado PROFEPA	(011 52) 686-568-9266 (011 52) 686-568-9267 (011 52) 686-458-9252 fax pfpabc@telnor.net
Emergency Preparedness and Response—Imperial Valley/Mexicali			
Fred Nippins Chief Imperial County Fire Department	(760) 355-1191 (760) 355-1482 fax frednippins@imperialcounty.net	Raymundo Noriega Civil Protection State of Baja California	(011 52) 686-557-2850 (011 52) 686-557-4758 fax raymondnoriega@yahoo.com.mx

Other Contacts

Tomás Torres U.S. EPA Border Program Coordinator U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 619-235-4775 torres.tomas@epa.gov	Dave Fege California-Baja California Regional Workgroup Coordinator U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 619-235-4769 fege.dave@epa.gov	Ricardo Martínez Senior Policy Advisor for Border Affairs California Environmental Protection Agency 916-324-7316 rmartinez@waterboards.ca.gov
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